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## Ireland

### Sanitary/Phytosanitary/Food Safety

### Irish change BSE depopulation policy

2006

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**Report Highlights:**

The Irish veterinary authorities will no longer require complete depopulation of herds where BSE is discovered.

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Includes PSD Changes: No  
Includes Trade Matrix: No  
Unscheduled Report  
London [UK1]  
[EI]

The Irish Department of Agriculture and Food has just announced that it will no longer require the total depopulation of herds in which BSE is discovered. Ireland has operated initially a voluntary depopulation, then mandatory depopulation, of animals in the same herd since the first case of BSE was discovered in Ireland in 1989. This measure was introduced originally as a national measure to meet export market and certification requirements for beef and dairy products, and to protect individual farmers who were finding it difficult to sell produce. The policy has been kept under ongoing review in recent years and, following the most recent review, it was concluded that it was appropriate that the policy should now be discontinued and replaced with a partial depopulation regime.

Introducing the change, Irish Agriculture Minister Mary Coughlan said that the decision had been taken following a review of a number of issues. Of particular significance is the continuing and significant decline in the incidence of the disease in Ireland given the comprehensive range of effective control measures currently in place. In addition, developments at EU and international level - including the forthcoming lifting of the UK ban played an important part in the decision being taken. The Minister said that the decision to discontinue the whole-herd depopulation policy was possible only because of the control measures that had operated in recent years and those currently in place.

The existing policy will be replaced by a partial depopulation regime, which will involve the removal of (a) the BSE positive animal(s), (b) birth and feed cohorts (as defined in EU legislation) and (c) the progeny, with compensation paid at market value. This approach is in line with EU legislation and OIE requirements and it is now the standard practice in the majority of member states.

Since 1989, the complete depopulation of herds (where an infected animal was discovered) has proven expensive for the Irish economy. However the economic benefits far outstripped the cost as the Irish authorities were able to produce an effective plan to show importing countries that the BSE issue was been carefully monitored and managed; and that measures in place went beyond known veterinary measures to ensure that exports from Ireland could be certified as from healthy animals.

In the first quarter of 2006, 16 cases of BSE have been discovered. This compares with 19 cases for the equivalent period in 2005. The total number of cases in 2005 was 69. This compares with 126 cases for 2004, which represents a year-on-year reduction of 44% in the number of confirmed cases. The total number of cases was 186 in 2003 and 333 cases in 2002.